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TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 0014  
INFO RUEHBJ/AMEMBASSY BEIJING PRIORITY 3844  
RUEHLM/AMEMBASSY COLOMBO PRIORITY 4096  
RUEHKA/AMEMBASSY DHAKA PRIORITY 9158  
RUEHIL/AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD PRIORITY 2078  
RUEHLO/AMEMBASSY LONDON PRIORITY 3512  
RUEHNE/AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI PRIORITY 9083  
RUEKJCS/SECDEF WASHDC PRIORITY  
RHEFDIA/DIA WASHDC PRIORITY  
RHHMUNA/CDR USPACOM HONOLULU HI PRIORITY  
RUEAIIA/CIA WASHDC PRIORITY  
RHEHNSC/NSC WASHDC PRIORITY

C O N F I D E N T I A L KATHMANDU 000228

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DEPT FOR SA/INS

E.O. 12958: DECL: 11/29/2015

TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PHUM](#) [PTER](#) [MOPS](#) [NP](#)

SUBJECT: PARTY DEMONSTRATIONS THWARTED; MAOIST VIOLENCE  
CONTINUES

REF: A. KATHMANDU 200

[¶](#)B. KATHMANDU 199  
[¶](#)C. 05 KATHMANDU 2956

Classified By: Ambassador James F. Moriarty, reasons 1.4 (b/d)

SUMMARY

[¶](#)1. (U) The demonstrations rescheduled by the Parties on January 21 led to clashes between demonstrators and security forces, disrupting the Parties' hopes for a mass turnout. The armed police force (APF) and civil police used tear gas, baton charges, and arrests to control demonstrators, who chanted slogans, threw stones at the police and burned tires around the central area of Kathmandu's Durbar Square. The government has released the majority of those arrested, including Nepali Congress President GP Koirala (who had been under house arrest). However, the political parties continue to organize demonstrations around the country and call for the postponement of the municipal elections scheduled for February 8; they have announced a bandh (general strike) for January 26. The Maoists' violence persists: clashing with the Royal Nepalese Army (RNA) in Makawanpur District, assassinating a candidate for mayor in Janakpur in eastern Nepal, and bombing several government buildings. End Summary.

SECURITY FORCES DISRUPT PARTY DEMONSTRATIONS IN KATHMANDU

[¶](#)2. (U) The rescheduled demonstrations on January 21 (after the government had thwarted the planned January 20 demonstrations) failed to attract the large numbers of protesters (ref A) the parties had hoped for. Due to the heavy presence of members of the APF and the civil police, with the RNA in reserve, only small groups, each less than a hundred, attempted to enter Kathmandu's Durbar Square (central Kathmandu). Security forces repelled demonstrators, who were throwing stones at the police, burning tires and chanting slogans, with baton charges, tear gas and arrests. Reports indicated police arrested over 200 demonstrators during the course of the day.

MANY POLITICAL LEADERS AND POLITICOS RELEASED

¶3. (U) According to the Informal Sector Service Center (INSEC), a local human rights organization, as of January 23 there were still 78 politicos and five human rights activists in detention out of the approximately 300 arrested during the past week. Of note, His Majesty's Government of Nepal (HMGN) released three senior Party leaders from house arrest on January 22: G.P. Koirala, President, Nepali Congress (NC) party; Narayan Man Bijukchhe, President, Nepal Workers and Peasants Party (NWPP); and K.P. Sharma Oli, Central Committee Member, Communist Party of Nepal, United Marxist-Leninist (CPN-UML). Five others, including CPN-UML General Secretary Madhav Kumar Nepal, remain under house arrest. Local and international human rights organizations reported that some political detainees were being kept in poor conditions. Some detainees reportedly had an inadequate supply of water and proper food. The reports of the poor conditions have received wide media coverage.

PARTIES: POSTPONE ELECTIONS, FORM MULTI-PARTY GOVERNMENT

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¶4. (C) Oli, released from house arrest on January 22, complained to Emboff that clashes and arrests of demonstrators on January 21 were a "heinous act by the government." As a result of these arrests and beatings, the "movement against the government will grow stronger and there is no choice but to continue our movement," he said. Oli commented that HMGN had been "terrified" of the mass meeting scheduled for January 20. He noted that with HMGN arresting political leaders and cadres on January 19, there was no reason for a daytime curfew on January 20. He added that arrests were not the solution to current political problems. Oli stressed that HMGN should cancel the February 8 municipal elections and take the initiative for multi-party democracy

and constitutional monarchy. He emphasized that only after these measures would the Parties be ready to talk with the King. Bijukchhe opined that the King was worried demonstrators might approach the Royal Palace on January 20 and thus had called for a curfew. (Note: The King was, however, in eastern Nepal at the time. End Note.) Bijukchhe also stated that the King should take the initiative to show a commitment to multi-party democracy and constitutional monarchy. Chandra Prakash Mainali, General Secretary of the CPN Marxist-Leninist (CPN-ML), told Emboff that the formation of a multi-party government was the only way out of the current political quagmire. He added that he thought HMGN should postpone the municipal elections and release all arrested politicos and cadres.

VALLEY BANDH JANUARY 26, OTHER DEMONSTRATIONS PLANNED

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¶5. (U) In protest of the security forces having disrupted the January 21 demonstrations, the seven-party alliance's Central Mass Movement Committee has announced a general strike (bandh) in the Kathmandu Valley for January 26. To protest recent arrests, the Parties have called strikes (bandhs) in different cities, e.g., in Butawal on January 23. The government has also cracked down on demonstrations organized by the Parties in other parts of Nepal and arrested protesters. A general strike (bandh) called by the Parties was observed in Biratnagar on January 21, where police arrested eleven Party activists. Small demonstrations also occurred on January 21 in Surkhet District (western Nepal), Palpa District (south central Nepal), Kalaiya (Bara District in southeastern Nepal), Taulihawa District (in south central), and Dhankuta District (eastern Nepal). These smaller demonstrations resulted in approximately thirty arrests; police have released most of those arrested. There were clashes between students and security forces in Butawal on January 22, resulting in 12 student arrests and several injuries. Authorities have released seventeen demonstrators arrested in Butawal on January 20.

MAOISTS KILL ONE CANDIDATE FOR MUNICIPAL POLLS

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¶ 6. (C) On January 22, Maoists assassinated a local leader who had announced his intention to run for mayor in the upcoming municipal election in Janakpur municipality (in eastern Nepal). Two Maoist assailants shot Bijay Lal Das of the Nepal Sadbhavana Party three times near his office in Janakpur. A local Maoist leader "Jeevan" reportedly telephoned journalists and claimed responsibility, saying the action was per "party policy." The political parties canceled a protest planned for January 23 after hearing news of the murder, but have not otherwise condemned the killing. The Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) told us that it would issue a statement condemning the assassination in Janakpur and seeking clarification from Maoist central leadership whether this was carried out by the Maoists. (OHCHR informed us that preliminary information was not sufficient to confirm that there was a local Maoist leader named "Jeevan."). (Note: OHCHR had issued a press release in early January saying it had received reassurances from Maoist central leadership that they would not "physically harm" candidates. Ref C. End Note.)

#### RECENT FIGHTING

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¶ 7. (U) Media have reported that heavy fighting between Maoists and the RNA occurred during the evening of January 21 in Faparbari in Makawanpur District (approximately 60 kms south of Kathmandu), resulting in at least 22 Maoist, six security force, and two civilian deaths. Reports stated that Maoists initiated the encounter by firing on an RNA security patrol acting on a tip about Maoist activity; the RNA had reportedly deployed an additional 300 soldiers to the area three days prior to the January 21 fight. There was also another report of Maoist-RNA fighting in Khatrikola of Syangja District (54 kms west of Pokhara, a popular tourist area and regional center), but further details are not yet

known.

#### MAOIST BOMBINGS IN SEVERAL CITIES

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¶ 8. (U) News sources reported several Maoist bombings of government facilities over the past two days. Although the bombings caused property damage, no one died. The largest occurred at the Biratnagar sub-metropolis office, where damage was estimated at USD 70,000. Maoists also bombed the Holgandi District Forest and Land Conservation Offices, the District Land Reforms Office in Kalaiya (Bara District), and the District Land Revenue Office and Agriculture Development Bank in Gaur (Rautahat District in southeastern Nepal). There were four civilian injuries reported in the Kalaiya blast. On January 21, Maoists set off bombs in Pokhara at the Land Survey Office and nearby in Lekhanath at the home of RNA Captain Santosh Karki.

#### COMMENT

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¶ 9. (C) The recent demonstrations and clashes between party cadre and security personnel represent an expected escalation in tensions leading up to the February 8 municipal elections. The government and the politicians are increasingly nervous. The politicos' statements urging the King to postpone the elections and form a multi-party government indicate the Parties might be willing to climb down if the government reaches out to them. Absent any initiative by the King to call for a cease-fire and reach out to the Parties, as the Ambassador suggested to key HMGN leaders on January 18 and 19 (ref B), Post expects the Parties and Maoists to continue their efforts to disrupt the municipal elections.

MORIARTY